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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1902
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1002
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RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3836
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 07 JAKARTA 001097

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SUBJECT: INDONESIA -- CHILD/FORCED LABOR IN THE PRODUCTION
OF GOODS

REF: A. STATE 43120

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 0157

[1](#)C. (07) JAKARTA 3359 AND PREVIOUS

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[1](#)1. (U) This report was coordinated with Consulate General
Surabaya and Consulate Medan.

[1](#)2. (U) SUMMARY: As requested in Ref A, this report
documents incidents of exploitation of child labor in the
production of goods in Indonesia. We found evidence of such
activities in the following industries: the shoe industry in
West Java; tobacco plantations in East Java; furniture
industry in East Java; and, fish and shrimp processing
industries in North Sumatra.

[1](#)3. (U) SUMMARY (Con'd): In addition, we report on possible
exploitative labor in tobacco plantations in North Sumatra.
We also document forced child labor in the birds nest
industry in Jakarta. We will continue to investigate other
allegations of exploitative or forced labor cases which we
were unable to substantiate for this report. We researched
extensively for evidence of forced adult labor but found
none. Based on the totality of our research, child labor in
the production of goods is a serious problem in Indonesia.
END SUMMARY.

[1](#)4. (U) Shoe Industry in Ciomas Regency, West Java:

a. Good: Shoes, primarily women's shoes and sandals,
manufactured in a household cottage industry in West Java for
distribution to outlets throughout the archipelago. There is
no evidence that the shoes are exported. Labels are local as
well national brands, possibly counterfeited brand names. We
could not confirm whether national shoe companies purchased
the shoes using their labels.

b. Type of Exploitation: Exploited child labor, primarily
aged 13-17, some younger, working long hours, for low pay and
in unsafe work conditions.

c. Sources of Information: A short 2008 report by Elsppat (a local NGO which works with out of school children), based on research for the International Labor Organization (ILO). In addition, in May 2008 Labatt interviewed Elsppat staff and made a field visit to Ciomas to directly observe this cottage shoe industry, visiting about 30 homes and observing two or three children in most homes. Labatt interviewed children and adults in the households. (Note: See ref B for more details on Labatt's investigation.)

d. Narrative: In Ciomas, West Java, a rural community near Bogor about 90 minutes from Jakarta, a cottage shoe industry encompassing 20 villages manufactures shoes in households. The shoes are purchased by Jakarta wholesale buyers for distribution to outlets across the country, from local markets to mall boutiques. Children regularly work 16-hour days - or sometimes round the clock during rush orders, napping at the workplace. They sit on the floor (causing ergonomic injuries) in enclosed spaces applying toxic glue with their fingers. Children typically begin working at age 14, after completing junior high school. A local department of health doctor told Labatt that the glue causes nausea and dizziness, and is addictive. Glue is possibly linked to liver damage later in life. Some children attend school half days but still work 12 hours a day and neglect their studies. Once children begin working, they do not want to return to school.

Each household employs between 3 and 20 workers which include the heads of households, their families, neighbors and workers from other cities in West Java. Many of the households employ children. Children are family members,

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neighbors and children who accompany adult workers from other cities. Under research done for ILO in a DOL-funded study completed in 2008, Elsppat documented 600 children in six of the villages. Children were mostly boys. This situation has existed for at least the four years documented by Elsppat. Elsppat told Labatt that it conservatively estimates over a thousand children working in an expanding industry across 20 villages. Wholesale buyers own many of the household factories, built on former rice paddies. Industry is driven by poverty with the average education level of children in Ciomas area grade six. Wholesale buyers claimed they are not aware of child workers or that it is not their concern. Adults said they cannot survive without the children's income and while many admit they would like their children to return to school, they do not believe they are exploiting the children. Children are considered "helpers" or "apprentices" and are paid through the adult workers, receiving a fraction of the USD90 a month paid to the adult based on piece work. (Minimum wage in a factory is about USD90 for a 40-hour week). Children do the same work as adults, cutting molds and gluing the materials.

e. Incidence: We have no evidence that a cottage shoe industry of this scale which employs children exists outside of Ciomas, although we have unsubstantiated reports from NGOs of scattered cottage shoe industries in poorer Jakarta suburbs.

f. Efforts to Combat Forced Labor: ILO and Elsppat worked with local officials over the past several years to improve the work situation and reduce child labor. Some local officials were responsive and others not; the impact on changing the attitudes of households and wholesale buyers in using child labor was minimal. Elsppat reported that outreach did persuade some households to stop employing children. Other households adopted the use of benches and tables to reduce the ergonomic stress, as well as use of glue applicators, keeping the glue containers closed, and doing the work in more open, airy rooms. Elsppat has also taught children how to sew clothing with sewing machines donated by the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, a healthier occupation

for children. Elsppat helped households to form organic vegetable farmers' cooperatives and to market the produce locally in order to reduce the need for children to work. Elsppat provided tutoring and vocational education to out of school children using their own volunteer staff donations and tutors who live in the community.

15. (U) Swallow Bird Nest Industry, Jakarta

a. Bird nests for use in food and medicines.

b. Type of exploitation: Forced child labor in western Jakarta, enslaved in cottage industries hidden in housing complexes behind locked gates. Children are forced to work long hours at low or no pay, in unsafe environments, and are not free to leave the workplace.

c. Sources of information: Labatt interview in April and May 2008 with the National Commission on Child Protection; evidence from police arrests. Child Commission conducted field investigation into this case in 2007 and 2008. Based on observations, interviews in the community and interviews with parents of exploited children, the Child Commission gathered enough evidence to persuade the Manpower Ministry and Indonesian National Police (INP) anti-trafficking unit to conduct a raid which uncovered more evidence. Police are still investigating. Labatt assistant interviewed the local Legal Aid Society attorney handling the case on behalf of the children and their families.

d. Incidence: This practice is limited to one neighborhood

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in west Jakarta. The 22 children cited above were documented because of police action. The Child Commission believes that based on observation and interviews that hundreds of more children are enslaved in this same neighborhood in locked housing complexes.

e. Narrative: Bird nests are a multi-million dollar industry in Asia. Indonesia exports birds nests to Hong Kong, Singapore and other countries. Only a small fraction is intended for the local market. In West Jakarta, Child Commission found dozens of houses located in an elite housing complex used as a factory to clean swallow bird nests, employing children aged 12 -17, although age was difficult to prove because of the tight security at the factory. They work 10-14 hours a day - and round the clock during peak demand -- cleaning birds nests and processing the nests into medicine and soup. Children are exposed to chemicals used to clean the birds nests from impurities. They sit on the floor in an enclosed room without sunlight. They work, eat and sleep in the house, on mattresses or on the floor in crowded rooms. They are promised salaries of USD35-40 per month but those rescued were never paid. Between 50-100 child workers are believed to be confined in a single house and not allowed to go out or accept visits by parents or other relatives, Child Commission alleges based on observations and interviews in the community. Children are beaten if they attempt to run away.

Oftentimes, parents were not aware that their children were lured into this slavery situation through employment brokers.

Parents could locate their children or were forced to pay exorbitant debts to secure their release. Employers paid USD50 per child to the recruitment agencies. Some children were forced to sign a two-year contract, while other children did not have contracts.

f. Efforts to Combat Forced Labor: On August 12, 2007, the Child Commission worked with Indonesian National Police (INP) and Manpower Ministry to carry out a raid rescuing six children who worked in a bird nest factory located in West Jakarta. On January 3, 2008, INP arrested a male suspect who employed the children. The trial is still ongoing. Chair of Legal Aid in Banyumas, Central Java told Labatt assistant

they are currently representing 15 children who have been rescued from the bird nest industry owned by the accused.

16. (U) Fish Processing Factories in Sibolga, North Sumatra

a. Fresh fish

b. Type of Exploitation: Exploited child labor in a North Sumatra seaport town, mostly aged 14-17, and some under age 10, working long hours, for low pay and in unsafe conditions.

c. Sources of Information: An investigative freelance television reporter documenting child labor in North Sumatra filmed the children in the two factories using a hidden video camera. The filming took place in April 2008. Subsequent filming was planned but the reporter has been unable to reenter the factory. In May 2008, ConGen Medan viewed the video showing the children at work and spoke with the reporter, who is trying to market the film to Indonesian TV stations. In late May, a local television station, TV-ONE showed approximately 30 seconds of the video as part of an evening news program, but no official action appears to have been taken. ConGen intends to investigate this case at the soonest opportunity. There are no official or other sources for this case due to the hidden nature and sensitivity of the case.

d. Incidence: We have no reports of children used in the

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fish processing industry outside of this one small town on the west coast of North Sumatra.

e. Narrative: Approximately 50 children were observed and videotaped in each of two factories using small scaling knives to clean remove fish scales. The children are brought to the factory by adults, often parents, who employ the children to help meet their daily production quotas. The cameraman captured the video using a hidden camera. The video seen by ConGen Medan depicted teenage children who appeared to be under age 18 sorting and cleaning the fish with small knives. Some appeared to be under age 10. Two youth were interviewed while cleaning fish. The cameraman asked if they were to attending school. Both replied that they had dropped out. At this factory fish are brought directly by fishing vessels and exported to Asian countries, the reporter told ConGen.

f. Efforts to Combat Forced Labor: No action is being taken at this time but ConGen intends to discuss this case directly with the governor.

17. (U) North Sumatra Prawn Factories

a. Prawns

b. Types of exploitation: Exploitation of child labor, aged 14-18, in two prawn and squid canning factories in industrial zones in Medan, North Sumatra, who work long hours, for low pay and in unhealthy conditions.

c. Sources of Information: A 2008 written report by a highly respected North Sumatra NGO (it asked to have its identity protected) and interviews by ConGen Medan with this NGO in May 2008, as well as a June 2008 telephone conversation by Labatt with this NGO. ConGen stated that this NGO is among the most reliable NGOs in North Sumatra whose reports have proven accurate in the past. The NGO directly observed the conditions, had staff working in the factory, and interviewed families and their children to document this case.

d. Incidence: We do not know of any other such industries in Indonesia.

e. Narrative: The NGO cited above recently documented exploitive employment of 70 children age 14-18 and an unknown number of children in another factory in industrial zones on the outskirts of Medan, the capital of North Sumatra. Children work 12 or more hours a day peeling prawns and slicing squid for export, for wages that are fraction of poverty adult wages. Children are recruited from villages around Medan through family who work in the factories. Children are bused in from homes by the employers into the factory compounds and not allowed to leave during breaks, making documenting their employment difficult. The children are not registered among the contract workers in the factories and employers claim the children are helping their parents. Work involves sorting export quality prawns, peeling them and putting them into boxes. Children inside the factory building work in very cold rooms and wear heavy coats, while other children work outside in the open air. They are paid according to daily quotas, receiving about USD1.50 a day in one factory and about USD80 a month in a second factory, slightly below the prevailing minimum wage for factory work with eight-hour days. Children are picked up by buses at 5 a.m., work from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m., and do not get home until 10 p.m. They are constantly weak and tired.

f. Efforts to Combat Forced Labor: The NGO which investigated this case has not reported this child

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exploitation to authorities out of concern that the government action could worsen the children's welfare. The government would remove children from the factories and return them to the plantations where they live, where they are vulnerable to being trafficked to Malaysia. The NGO instead intends to propose a solution which would remove children under 15 years of age from the factories, and provide decent working hours, food and better conditions for the older teenage workers. The children are largely illiterate and have few alternatives.

18. (U) Tobacco Plantations, North Sumatera

a. Tobacco for cigar wrappings

b. Type of exploitation: Exploitation of child labor who work helping their families in harvesting tobacco on plantations in North Sumatra Province. Allegedly children worked long hours at low wages, using dangerous tools and were subject to pesticides, according to a 2004 ILO study. However, ConGen Medan investigated this from several sources in May 2008, including a visit to the plantation in question, and could confirm no use of child labor.

c. Sources of Information: ILO's Child Labor Report on Tobacco Plantations on North Sumatera Province based on 2004 field research by a local NGO; ConGen Medan interviews with local NGOs and a visit to one of the plantations which allegedly exploited children. The NGO which conducted the study used questionnaires to interview 100 adults and 100 children in 2004. This NGO refused to discuss the case with personnel from Consulate Medan.

d. Narrative: Adult workers in the North Sumatra tobacco plantations have traditionally brought family members to help in the fields, including young children. In the 2004 ILO study, children worked for families sharing in the adult contract workers' wages. Child laborers help their family in seasonal work by performing jobs suited to their age and sex. The child labor shifts usually are designed to accommodate school hours and the nature of tobacco growing. This means work can only be done at certain times of the day, particularly picking insects off the plants (which feed at dawn and dusk). Harvesting leaves is done in the early morning to ensure that they can be sorted, processed, and sent for drying in one day. Hazards include injuries from pickaxes and hoes, and exposure to pesticides.

e. Incidence: The ILO study was done in several state-owned plantations in Deli Serdang district, North Sumatera province and this type of tobacco plantation is limited to that district. This particular type of tobacco is used for export to high-end cigar manufacturers in Europe. ConGen Medan interviewed NGOs and visited one of the tobacco plantations and could find no proof that child labor still exists. European buyers closely inspect the production process for cigar wrappers and it is possible that this has discouraged the traditional use of child labor. ILO told Labatt that they would follow up with their sources to see if they can find any evidence that this practice still exists.

f. Efforts to Combat Forced Labor: ILO worked with the local government following their study to educate plantation owners and families on use of child labor.

19. (U) Labor on Tobacco Plantations Jember District, East Java

a. Tobacco for cigarettes, primarily clove cigarettes

b. Type of exploitation: Exploitation of child labor, mostly age 15-17, in growing and processing tobacco in East

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Sumatra, working long hours, for low pay and in unsafe conditions.

c. Sources of Information: ILO-IPEC 2006 study "Child Labor on Tobacco Plantations in Jember District." Researchers interviewed 100 parents and 100 children, 50 respondents each in four locations. Labatt also interviewed the executive director of Community Self-Sufficiency Initiative Foundation (YPSM) in Jember District which researched this situation. Surabaya Consulate General interviewed directors of radio stations in Jember who are familiar with the issue.

d. Narrative: Children in Jember District of East Java have traditionally helped parents in the tobacco fields. Work involving children includes preparing the land, planting, watering, fertilizing, spraying insecticides, planting, drying tobacco and other processing work. Work is seasonal. Boys and girls participate equally. The numbers involved are not known. Children age 15 to 17 work between 7 and 9 hours a day; younger children work fewer hours. Over 86 percent of those interviewed are age 15 or older. Children are paid basically the same as adults according to output, making between USD12 to USD35 a month. Hazards include extreme heat and rain, heavy lifting, exposure to toxic fertilizers and insecticides, exposure to tobacco dust and aroma, hot and stuffy rooms, use of sharp tools, and no access to toilets. Fifty four percent of children interviewed reported occupational related accidents and sickness.

e. Incidence: Use of child labor in this type of tobacco plantation work appears to be limited to this part of East Java.

f. Efforts to Combat Child Labor: ILO has worked with the local government to educate the community by asking parents to let their children, especially girls, return to school. They have also carried out safety and health education programs. Families still choose put their children to work, particularly during harvest season. However, YPSM and ILO told Labatt that although child workers still exist in the plantations the number of children has been reduced significantly in the past ten years due to government efforts to promote compulsory study.

10. (U) Furniture and Woodworking Industries in Jepara Regency, Central Java

a. Wood furniture, screens, handicrafts and other products carved from wood

b. Types of exploitation: Exploitation of child labor, age 12-17, in furniture and woodcarving cottage industries in one district of Central Java, who work long hours, for low pay, and in unhealthy, unsafe work conditions.

c. Sources of Information: ILO's 2008 draft report of Rapid Assessment on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), Child and Young Workers in the Furniture and Woodworking Industries in Central Java, Indonesia; a Labatt interview with a lecturer at the University of Diponegoro in Semarang and with an official at the Jepara Manpower Office. (Note: While the ILO study is still in draft form, Labatt interviewed the Diponegoro University researcher who conducted that research, and the information in this section is based primarily on that interview with permission from the researcher to source him.) University of Diponegoro methodology used direct interviews in the community using questionnaires and focus group discussion, observation and gathering of secondary data. Interviews also were done with local government agencies, village heads, and some members of Jepara District Action Committee on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. They interviewed 152 respondents: 28 female and 124

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male, 75 of below 18 years of age, and 77 over age 18.

d. Narrative: In Jepara, Central Java, the furniture and woodcarving industry employed 85,250 workers in 2001. Woodcarving began in Jepara in the 15th century. In 2007, University of Diponegoro documented 2300 child workers in just half the Jepara Regency. Over 80 percent are boys. Children work in cottage or household furniture and woodcarving industries which supply medium to large companies for domestic and foreign markets. Children are regarded as apprentices. The wholesale buyers pay the adults based on production and either do not know about child labor or choose to ignore it. Children earn about USD2 a day, working at least 12 hours a day. Child wages are comparable to what adults earn. (Note: Minimum factory wages in Jepara for eight-hour shifts are about USD100 a month.) The Jepara Manpower Office provided Labatt a long list of medium and large companies that outsourced their orders to home industries. These companies usually have over 300 employees and are oftentimes are foreign direct investment companies, according to the Manpower Office.

Production is mainly of unpainted screens, and European style furniture carved in teak, mahogany and ebony, as well as of handicrafts responding to changing demands. The tasks performed by children include box making, carpentry (wood cutting, plane the wood, assembling), wood carving, furniture caulking, product coding, lifting, heating wood in ovens, packing, painting furniture, plaiting rattan, polishing, sanding, and upholstery crafting. There was no separation between child workers and adults. Hazards include chemical exposure to glue, paint, coloring as well as solvent, and LPG for rattan dryer support, as well as exposure to teakwood sap and wood dust, and loud noise.

e. Incidence: University of Diponegoro said this type of furniture and woodcarving industry is not unique to Jepara, Central Java, but is common in other parts of Indonesia, such as in Cirebon, West Java.

f. Efforts to Combat Child Labor: The Central Java Provincial Regulation on Prevention of Child Labor was passed in December 2007. To enforce the regulation, initial actions included data collection on the number of child workers by the Japara Manpower Office and pursuing the legal cases of child workers. Manpower also is planning to conduct workshops on child worker protection with focus on the furniture industry. ILO presented the results of its study at a workshop in collaboration with the Japara Manpower Office.

¶11. (U) We also obtained information about goods that may have some indication of exploitive child labor in their production, but not enough to report in this tasking. NGOs reported to us, based on first-hand witness accounts from their staff, of exploitation of child labor in clothing and shoe industry in Jakarta, brick making in Sumatra, gold and silver mining in Java and Kalimantan, and in the lumber industry in Kalimantan. We will continue to investigate these in the coming weeks. We also will work with labor organizations and NGOs to advocate for the elimination of the child labor exploitation cited in this report.

HEFFERN